

AGN. NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS**

**JUNE 9, 2009**

On May 14, 2009, U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer introduced legislation, S. 1055, to grant the Congressional Gold Medal to the Japanese American 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion and the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team of the U.S. Army in recognition of their heroic and dedicated service during World War II.

The 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion was comprised of Japanese Americans from Hawaii, where they were serving with the Hawaii National Guard when Pearl Harbor was bombed. After the attack, these soldiers, who were born in Hawaii to immigrants from Japan, were guarded at gunpoint because their loyalty was at question. However, in June of 1942, 1,400 from the Hawaii National Guard were sent to Camp McCoy in Wisconsin, where they trained for nine months, and were then sent on the Camp Selby in Mississippi. After several additional months of training, due to the 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion's outstanding performance in war maneuvers and exercises, President Roosevelt and the War Department re-opened military service to Japanese American volunteers. These volunteers later became the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team. The

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MOTION

MOLINA \_\_\_\_\_

RIDLEY-THOMAS \_\_\_\_\_

YAROSLAVSKY \_\_\_\_\_

ANTONOVICH \_\_\_\_\_

KNABE \_\_\_\_\_

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motto of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team was “go for broke” which is a gambling term that meant risking everything on one great effort to win big.

Most of the families of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team were subject to internment in relocation or internment camps pursuant to President Roosevelt’s Executive Order 9066 which declared that all people of Japanese ancestry were excluded from the entire Pacific Coast except for those in internment camps. These “camps” were surrounded by barbed wired with armed guards located in sentry towers, and were often in desolate, harsh environments where extreme temperatures, no running water, poor sanitary conditions, and substandard, barrack-like housing were the norm.

The 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team trained for almost a year and on May 1, 1944, they were sent to battle in the European theater, where they served valiantly in France, Italy, and Germany. The 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team famously rescued the “Lost Battalion” at Biffontaine, France, and suffered casualties of over half of its roster, over 800 men, while rescuing 211 members of the “Lost Battalion”. The 522<sup>nd</sup> Field Artillery Battalion of the 442<sup>nd</sup> was among the first Allied troops to release prisoners from the Dachau concentration camp.

The men of the 442<sup>nd</sup> was awarded 9,486 Purple Hearts, 21 Medals of Honor and an unprecedented eight Presidential Unit Citations.

These brave and loyal men had to combat two wars: the war against the

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enemies of the United States and its allies, and the war of prejudice at home. Because of their sacrifices, loyalty, bravery, and patriotism, the Board of Supervisors must express its strong support of Senator Boxer's legislation which would award the Congressional Gold Medal to the 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

THEREFORE, I MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Direct the Chief Executive Officer to prepare a five-signature letter to the Los Angeles Congressional Delegation urging their support of the Senate Bill 1055 authored by Senator Barbara Boxer, and cosponsored by Senators Daniel Inouye, Daniel Akaka, and Dianne Feinstein, to grant the Congressional Gold Medal to the Japanese American 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion and the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team of the U.S. Army in recognition of their heroism, patriotism, and extreme sacrifice and bravery during World War II.

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